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PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN RELATION
TO THE BERLIN SITUATION IN 1952

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TO THE BERLIN SITUATION IN 1952

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I. The Problem

Request was made by PY/Intelligence/Control No. 28, June 16, 1952 concerning the following points:

(a) "The PY aims and implications which stem from physical acts of bypassing Berlin. Such intelligence on physical factors is therefore needed in order that we may respond to, counteract, or forestall, the discernible aims of the other side."

(b) "The PY vulnerabilities exposed in the other side in their encirclement of Berlin, which vulnerabilities may have been produced among their own people" by certain acts, such as digging of canals across private property, conscription of labor, use of child and woman labor, of East German military formations, deprivation of utilities, and of work - travel permits, etc.

(c) "How effective will the Berlin encirclement be in causing West Berliners to mentally capitulate to the Soviet system?"

II. Scope and Limitations

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Material used: ~~SECRET~~, CIA Library material, CIA Cables and OCI Reports. ORR information, current newspaper clipping service, files of East and West German newspapers and magazines. Unclassified literature on the Berlin airlift of 1948/49 and on Berlin's economic conditions.

III. Summary

The chief vulnerability of Soviet policy in Germany follows from the inherent contradiction of two objectives: (1) the subjugation of Eastern Germany to the interests of the Kremlin by making it a fully integrated satellite; (2) the utilization of Eastern Germany as a base for attracting all Germany into the Soviet orbit by appealing to national and neutralist leanings. While Soviet acts reflect the pursuit of the first aim, Soviet propaganda tries to conceal and becloud the true intentions. The task of our propaganda is, therefore, to unmask Soviet duplicity, particularly by alleging the parallel facts in other subjugated areas. The measures taken by the Soviets in Berlin lend themselves in many ways to such an exposure.

The prognosis for the morale of West Berlin is favorable, since the same reasons which operated during the 1948/49 blockade are still valid, as long as Berlin feels itself sustained by the West.

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IV. Discussion

1. Basic Contradictions of Soviet Policy in Germany

A. In General

The psychological implications of the Berlin situation have to be visualized in relation to the general trend of Soviet policy in Germany.

Soviet policy in Germany seems to pursue two aims:

(1) Complete satellization, sovietization, and economic and military integration of the GDR along the line of the other "People's democracies."

(2) The more important aim of using the GDR as a base for attracting all Germany into the Soviet orbit. The achievement of this goal would probably decide the struggle for Europe in favor of the USSR.

Both aims are contradictory at the present stage since they cannot be pursued with full intensity at the same time, at least as long as the latter aim -- that of winning over all Germany -- has to be pursued by psychological means.

Sovietization involves, in great measure, the isolation and seclusion of the country and the removal of certain strata of society from their economic and social position. However, every step towards final separation of Eastern Germany from the Western Zone and its full integration with the USSR is apt to antagonize many people in Western Germany and to increase the tacit resistance within the GDR. The striving for unity in Germany is so strong that it must be made the basic theme of all propaganda.

Because of this contradiction, the process of sovietization in the GDR lags far behind that in the other satellites and is only in the initial stage of the typical political, social, and military development.

For the same reason, Soviet propaganda conceals the intention of sealing off and integrating East Germany, and depicts the steps toward full severance as mere episodes in the fight for German unity, a fight allegedly necessitated by Western aggression. It is, therefore, Soviet policy to incite the West to reactions which can in turn be denounced as provocations.

Moreover, Soviet propaganda holds out the promise of a retreat from the present degree of sovietization if there should be a neutralization of a united Germany.

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B. In Berlin

As in the over-all German position, a contradiction prevails in the Berlin situation. The anomalous position of Berlin, having its origin in an arrangement based on the idea of temporary condominium, has been rendered permanent by Soviet policy. As an island within a closed Soviet state, Berlin is a source of incessant annoyance, an unwanted leak in Soviet information security, and a point of communication and interchange with the West. Berlin is the economic and administrative center of the GDR and its foreign-controlled Western sector a serious obstacle in the way of full sovietization of Eastern Germany. In view of the impending armament, the steady stream of defectors to the West Zone, especially of youth of military age, will hardly be tolerable (Note 1). The over-all Soviet objective as long as the West sector exists, is, therefore, to isolate the West Sector from its immediate "hinterland", to dry it up, to encyst it like a foreign body within a living organism, in order to reduce it more and more to an artificial enclave which will be abandoned as meaningless in time.

This cannot be told to the people of Berlin. Before the war, the population of both sectors was to a large extent economically dependent upon the function of Berlin as a capital -- a capital not only of all Germany, but of Central Europe as well. For the Berliner it was a "Weltstadt", an international emporium, not merely a center of administration of those provinces which now form the GDR. (Note 2) Berlin is a symbol of German unity and with the exception of the clique ruling the East Zone, every one of its citizens would utterly resent final separation from Western Germany.

As a matter of fact, the initiative for separation lay with the Soviets, who are responsible for the blockade, the severance of the city administration and its utilities, as accomplished in 1949, (Note 3), the division of the industry, and the restriction of inter-zone communication to and from work. It requires a great measure of persuasion to publicize these acts as episodes in the fight for unity (Note 4), and to blame the other side for necessitating such acts, a line of propaganda not very likely to impress Berliners who had been exposed to similar reasoning at the time of Goebbels.

2. Psychological Vulnerabilities of Soviet Policy in Germany

A. In General

(1) Our propaganda should denounce the insincerity of Soviet unity propaganda, stressing the consistent trend of full economic and military subjugation to the interests of the USSR as a new

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form of colonialism practiced against Western populations. It should point out the typical pattern of the sovietization procedure followed in the other satellite states.

(2) Propaganda should turn to the groups of population, hitherto spared in the GDR, as farmers, middle class people, and religious groups, showing what fate is in store for them in case of full sovietization as practiced in the USSR and the satellites.

(3) It should point to the past acts of rape and plunder, the ever-lasting drain of reparations from current production, the forced resettlement of specialists, the exploitation of war prisoners, and the Oder-Neisse frontier, as proof that Soviet policy is guided by exclusive Soviet Russian interests.

(4) It should denounce the GDR Five Year Plan as devised to meet Soviet Russian interests, pointing out the economic wastefulness, from the standpoint of German unity in building up the East Zone industry. (Note 5)

(5) It should show the discrepancy between Soviet words and deeds and the purpose behind apparent concessions and the advocacy of neutralism in the struggle for domination of all Germany.

(6) It should contrast the unity propaganda with the actual effort to transform the German inter-zonal border into an international boundary with all the accessories of Soviet border fortifications, such as dead zones, watch towers, search lights, blood hounds, etc.

B. In Berlin

(1) Our propaganda should harp on the fact that all actions of separation were initiated by the Soviets, and that the policy of harassment and chicaneries is designed to create an atmosphere conducive to further separation.

(2) That the Soviet policy in fact aims at reducing Berlin to the provincial capital of the East Zone.

(3) That the policy of bypassing West Berlin is not only a nuisance but a costly waste from the point of view of German unity.

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(4) That the establishment of two separate town administrations is likewise economic waste.

(5) That the hurried construction of railways, S-Bahn-lines, and canals results in low quality work.

(6) That Berlin at present still gets a preferential treatment in comparison with other iron-curtain areas because of its exposure to the West and that preferential treatment of border districts is an old Communist device (see Note 6).

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3. Implications for Psychological Warfare in the By-Passing of West Berlin

A. Railroads

Building of peripheral rail lines around Berlin was started chiefly for military reasons as early as 1900. The German railroad net had to serve as a means of speedy transportation of troops from East to West. This policy was continued during World War II. The Soviets took over where the Nazis had left off. The outer half circle around Berlin was completed in July 1951 by filling in the missing section Karow-Oranienburg and rebuilding the section Biesenhorst-Karow, which the Russians had dismantled in 1945, both to the Northeast. (State HICOG, EE, Desp #293, Oct. 17, 1951). Since the existing outer freight cut through three miles (5 km.) of the U. S. sector, a parallel line of 15 miles (24 km.) was built to the South of Berlin between Grossbeeren and Schönfeld.

The latter required the erection of 29 bridges and the laying of 79 miles (126 km) of rails which were taken from other lines. The work would have required two years under regular procedure, but was completed in eight months. There were 4,500 persons, among them activist groups, put to work, 40% women, working in three shifts, day and night. After finishing on July 10, 1951, a breakdown occurred which was repaired by September 15, 1951 (HICOG, EE, Desp. #293, Oct. 17, 1951).

As far as the passenger traffic is concerned, the existing terminal stations of the several converging lines will be replaced by a central station - Friedrich-Strasse - in the East sector.

Psychological vulnerabilities: The construction of new lines is not dictated by requirements of traffic, but by strategic considerations. The wastefulness and senselessness of all the efforts in hastening the construction of the Grossbeeren-Schönfeld parallel stretch is obvious.

B. Canals

Large traffic has been one of the foundations of the economic position of Berlin. The construction of canals dates back to the 18th century. The main Elbe-Oder canal cuts through the West Sector and is liable to interruption as a Western countermeasure against closing the canals connecting West Berlin with West Germany.

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It was decided on April 19, 1951 by East German authorities (allegedly on Soviet order) to build a new canal, which would mainly follow the route of the existing Paretz-Niederneuendorf Canal, measuring 22.5 mi (36 km) in length, and bypassing entirely the West Sector to the West and North.

The official motivations for its construction was to speed up traffic between the Elbe and the Oder.

Yet, according to West German experts, no time will actually be saved. West German observers maintain that one of the purposes of the construction of the canal was the concealment from the Berlin population of the true amount of bulk reparation goods shipped to the USSR by canal transport.

Although the Paretz-Niederneuendorf Canal follows mainly the course of an old canal used at present for drainage purposes and of the river Brieselang, 10 mi (16 km) of its 22.5 mi (36 km) required enlargement and deepening (proposed width c. 10 ft., depth c. 10 ft.), and the construction of 12.5 mi (20 km) of embankments, several locks, bridges, and underpasses, as well as pumping stations and dams to avoid flooding of the adjacent area. The work commenced in May 1951, encountered "unforeseen" difficulties, such as high water, frozen ground, drifting sand, lack of spare parts of the dredges, and difficulties in transportation. In August-September 1951, the work was placed under immediate Russian control (Neue Zeitung, September 24, 1951), with a Russian as chief director who worked with three interpreters. The construction which would require three years under regular conditions was performed with unreasonable speed, the original deadline being May 15, 1952. The canal was officially opened on June 28, 1952, but settling of the ground at the Schönnewald lock prevented its being put in operation (OCI 6443, July 18, 1952). A time lag of several months between the opening date and the actual use is expected by local observers. Part of the work was done by private contractors, part by the East German Chief Directorate of Navigation.

Labor conditions were under criticism by East and West German papers. Women and teenage workers were employed. The East press reported proudly that 2,000 pairs of shoes, and a large quantity of work clothing and sporting goods had been distributed among the working force (State HICOG #790, March 26, 1952).

Psychological vulnerabilities: Except from certain labor difficulties, no reports on the use of forced labor, youth organizations or paramilitary formations, or the expropriation of land in connection with the construction, could be traced. The hardships mentioned above are probably overshadowed now by the pressure of recruiting for the uranium mines, the imminent "Service for Germany" (Washington Post, July 29, 1952), the general resentment against the speed-up practices (Hennecke workers), the piecework system with ever-increasing norm requirements, etc.

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The construction of the Paretz-Niederneandorf Canal is not economically justified. It is doubtful whether it will save transportation time, and it is essentially of strategic and political character. The hasty construction resulted in defective work.

C. Local Transit

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A new S-Bahn line from Oranienburg southwards is being surveyed to bypass the Western Sector (██████████ 1952). The Reichsbahn is committed to complete the work within six months (~~Oct. 1952, Berlin, Jan. 1953~~). 25X1A2g

Psychological vulnerabilities: The separation of the local transit results in a slow-down and complication of the system, and is a waste of money and work.

D. Travel between Sectors

The traffic between sectors is in general unrestricted. Yet there is pressure on West Sector workers employed in the East Sector to move to the East Sector, and a complete closing is feared (Christian Science Mon. July 10, 1952).

The ban on visiting real property of West Berliners situated in the East Zone is particularly ruthless because it hits chiefly holders of small vegetable garden plots and week end houses, who are mainly workmen and retired people. Undoubtedly, deeply resented in both sectors is the ban on visiting cemeteries by mourners and the inspection of coffins at the sector border. Applications for visiting garden plots must be submitted two to three weeks in advance (Telegram, June 29, 1952).

Psychological vulnerabilities: All these chicaneries originate exclusively with the GDR authorities and are likely to be increased with the East German rearmament. It is characteristic that they are directed mainly against workers, the unemployed, and the old aged.

E. Telephone-Telegraph

Cables connecting the West Sector with Western Germany cross the East Zone, while the East Sector is likewise serviced by cables cutting through the West Sector. During the blockade the cables of the West Sector were not interrupted by the Soviets, since

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the U. S. commandant threatened retaliation. At present traffic from East Berlin is routed through the East Zone. Since May 27, 1952 long distance calls from the East Zone have been routed through Leipzig ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 25X1A2g

Psychological vulnerabilities: Slowdown of communications and waste.

F. Sewage

Cutting off the West Sector from the sewage disposal plants which are situated in the East Sector and East Zone would involve a sanitary hazard to the entire population of the town and also deprive the East Zone of the proceeds from the sale of methane gas produced by the clarification plants. Observers, therefore, doubt that the East will deny West Berlin the use of the sewage disposal plants ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 25X1A2g

4. The Morale of the West Sector

In a recent Department of State estimate, the following conclusion was reached:

"So long as living standards can be met in West Berlin, the population of the three Western sectors of the city will remain impervious to Soviet and/or GDR threats, harassment and blockade. There appears to be no method by which West Berlin may be brought under Soviet control save by the use of force, so long as these standards can be maintained (State, DRW, June 9, 1952, Intelligence Estimate #40). 25X1A2g

Another report ~~(C.I.A. Estimate #40)~~ (6) is less optimistic: "Separation from the West in a complete or partial blockade would probably result in a gradual drop of morale as time went by." This estimate was based on the consideration that the blockade of 1948/49 was much dramatized, and a replay of the same theme would fall pretty flat, and that deprivations would hit more at present because the standard of living is much higher than three years ago.

But most observers are convinced that West Berliners would brave another blockade as long as they were sufficiently supported by the West Zone and the Western powers.

The initial stockpiles are now considerably higher (during the blockade, they amounted to food for one month, coal for 45 days; now the average is for six months, and another airlift is considered technically feasible.

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The main liability is unemployment in the West sector, which would be largely increased by lack of raw materials. A counter-blockade would be less efficient owing to the bypassing countermeasures and because smuggling has become more difficult. A large part of the population are dependent in their living standards on utilization of the margin between West and East currencies. On Western unemployment pay in "hard" Western marks, they can often buy as much in the Eastern sector as their working Eastern colleagues. (Manchester Guardian, Weekly, July 10, 1952).

Yet, as to the morale of the West Berliners, whose endurance and resourcefulness was decisive for the success of the airlift, the same reasons obviously prevail now as they did three years ago. For one thing, after the humiliating defeat in World War II, Berlin has felt again the taste of a major political victory. It was not merely a victory over the Russian and German Communists, but a victory within the German camp, by which the role of Berlin as the future German capital has been re-established. After 1945, many people in Germany had felt that the center of new Germany should be removed from the Prussian Berlin to the West. Chancellor Adenauer was accused by his opponents of having shared that view.

Whatever may be said for another German city as the capital of Germany from the point of view of German civilization, the issue was decided in favor of Berlin. After 1950, Chancellor Adenauer expressly spoke of Berlin as Germany's future capital and the recent "Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal German Republic" affirms in its Annex A, the status of Berlin as the future capital. Furthermore, several actions by the United States and the German Federal Republic served to improve the economic situation of West Berlin. These actions include ERP, tax and freight rate privileges, federal aid and guarantees, and the encouragement of investments in West Berlin.

Although precisely these subsidizing measures show the unsound economic position of isolated West Berlin, they stress the role of Berlin as the symbol of German unity.

After the experience of the exclusive Soviet domination immediately following 1945 with the period of plundering, rape, and wholesale dismantling, after the falsified fusion of the Social Democratic and Communist parties, and after the great hardships of the blockade, West Berlin stands firmly behind its forceful mayor, Dr. Reuter. There was in all elections a much smaller Communist vote than before Hitler. The proximity of the East Zone, which permits no illusion about Soviet conditions, and the sense of fighting for its existence as a city of world importance have produced an aggressive fighting spirit which finds its expression in organizations like that of the Free German Jurists, and in the violent reaction against the kidnapping of Dr. W. Linse. There is at present no place where the intellectual and political struggle against Communism is carried on with like vigor.

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V. Notes

1. Refugees from the East Zone are fleeing to West Berlin at the rate of 1,000 a day, five times the daily average of last Spring (est. ~~100,000~~). 25X1A2g
2. The textile industry located in one sector depends on the other for processing and finishing (Howley, Frank L., Berlin Command, p. 253).
3. Half of the population of Berlin used to live by services in the fields of government, finance, tourism, etc. (Cachilewski, Geo. Berlin kommt wieder, p. 87).
4. "It is clear to every man that East German authorities were forced to this step because of sabotage and diversionist activities of organizations in West Germany." An official East German comment on the occasion of new travel restrictions, quoted in Manchester Guardian, July 23, 1952.
5. The Ferro-Combine in Fuerstenberg is supposed to get its iron from Sweden, its coal from Poland. The Ferro-Work Mueckenberg will make coke out of lignite. "Almost a quarter of a billion marks is spent for installations which would have no justification in a united Germany. (Publication of the Investigation Committee of Free German Lawyers, "Aus der Zone des Unrechts", Sammelnummer 846323, April 1, 1952, p. 7)."
6. The rations in East Berlin are higher than in the remaining East Zone.
7. Details on the Paretz-Niederneuendorf Canal in the East German journal "Der Verkehr" of Oct. 17, 1951, in an article by Dipl. Ing. Otto Klaus, a translation of which is included in State Hicog EE Desp. 293, of October 17, 1952.
8. It is not permitted in the East Zone to leave a home for more than 24 hours without telling the police, according to a law issued at the end of July 1952 (New York Times, July 30, 1952).
9. Compare the memoirs of Brig. Gen. Frank L. Howley, Commandant of the U. S. Sector during the blockade (at present Chancellor of New York University): "Never in history had the Germans known their minds so clearly, never had they stood so firm against one occupying power. It would be fair to say that, in the three Western Sectors, the people were not so much behind their officials as behind the Western powers that sustained them (Berlin Command, N. Y., 1950, p. 257)." Also, Lowell Bennett, Berlin Bastion, Frankfort, 1951, p. 75: There was "no serious crack in the morale" during the blockade.

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VI. Appendix

1. The Office of Current Intelligence has made the following observations regarding the psychological vulnerabilities of the Communist position in Berlin:

a. long-standing vulnerabilities of Communists in East Germany (e.g., to the charges of violation of post-war agreements by the Russians, of complete Soviet domination, of East German subjugation to Soviet economic needs, etc., etc.) are not open to fuller exploitation than heretofore as the Russians ostensibly move toward the satellization of East Germany. (The rape of Berlin by Russian soldiers, Soviet kidnappings, and the seizure of German property by the Russians probably still excited more anger on the part of Berliners than more recent events;)

b. the weaknesses of the Communist position in Berlin are part of the general vulnerability of their position in all of Germany and should be exploited as such;

c. the rapidity with which apparent changes are now being made offers a particularly fortuitous time to exploit an atmosphere of uncertainty.

2. It is the conviction of OCI, based on intelligence information at hand of current developments in East Germany, that the following general subjects offer the greatest opportunities for psychological exploitation in the near future:

a. East German rearmament: (1) An East German "national army" cannot be accomplished without conscription and general military service for East German youth. (2) The likelihood of conscription and compulsory military service has been made necessary by the failure to win voluntary recruits in sufficient numbers. (3) Registration is the first step toward conscription, or, toward a system of near-compulsory fulfillment of "voluntary" quotas of recruits. (4) The officer corps of the new national army will be made up of the ex-Nazi and Wehrmacht military figures, now being so obviously courted. (5) An East German national army will be German only in name: an East German Army will produce an East German Rokossovsky, whose primary interests will be Soviet cannon-fodder. (6) The cost of East German rearmament will be borne by East Germans - arms will be squeezed from the economy at the expense of consumption, reconstruction, and peaceful investments.

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b. East German isolation: (1) The Sovietization of East Germany is raising new obstacles to the reunification of Germany. (2) East German reaction to the initialling of the contractual and EDC agreements is in its violence significant of an East German desire to excuse an intention to accept the permanently divided status of Germany and to carry out the communization of that part of Germany under Soviet domination. (3) The desire of the East German government to erect barriers against the West is significant of the desires of the East Germans in contrast with the West to close rather than to leave open the lines of communication between East and West. (4) The speed with which East German leaders are proceeding with the isolation of their country is significant of their fears of their own personal demises in the event a free unification of Germany should come about. (5) Isolation is a sign of fear, and the knowledge that East German policies can be carried out only in isolation from its criticism and observation of the West. (6) East German isolation cannot be accomplished without disrupting the lives of all East Germans: the evacuation of border residents; the prohibition of interzonal travel; the expropriation of land; the disruption of all contacts between East and West.

c. East German communization: (1) East German "democratization" will be Soviet style. (2) The reorganization of the government is the admission of political and economic failures on the part of the East German government. (3) "Reorganization" is another name for "communization": the abolition of traditional administrative organs, the formation of coordinating committees, the creation of inner cabinets is designed to monopolize political power by the SED. (4) East German reorganization is preparing the exit for bourgeois political activity: the Pankow government cannot claim mass approval while preparing the arrest of non-Communist "leaders" on trumped-up charges of espionage. (5) "Reorganization" will penetrate throughout East German life: the East Zone church will be tolerated only so long as it serves Communist purposes, and recent attacks upon Protestants and Catholics alike point to the trend. (6) "Reorganization" means collectivization: in agriculture, in industry, and in labor, with all the consequences for East German citizens in loss of freedom, disruption of established social patterns, and deteriorating living standards.

d. East German Sovietization: (1) East German leaders, to retain their position have had to subscribe to Soviet foreign policy - including subscription to the Oder-Neisse decision.

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(2) The Russians have not offered to leave East Germany and will not make such an offer: the symbol of satellization is the acceptance of Soviet controls, remote or otherwise, in perpetuity. (3) An East German-Soviet contractual arrangement, if it is ever offered, would continue Soviet domination in a different form. (4) Symbolic of Sovietization is the enlistment of East Germany in a phony peace campaign while proclaiming rearmament - a phenomenon typical of the Soviet Orbit. (5) "Soviet models" means the abandonment of traditional German forms - a century of traditional German legal codes will now be junked for the lawlessness of the kidnapper and the rule of the police state.

e. East German failure: After seven years of intensive activity, the Russians and their East German puppet leaders have been compelled to admit failure in every one of their major objectives: they have failed to achieve Communist domination of all of Germany; they have failed to drive the West from Western Berlin; they have failed to prevent the re-entry of a free Germany into the family of Free Western Nations. They will now fail to foreclose the possibility of a reunited but free all-German nation.

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